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ECHOES OF BETHLEHEM

by

Washington Morse

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ECHOES *of* BETHLEHEM
The COMING *of the* KING

BY

A. WASHINGTON MORSE

ILLUSTRATION

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I HAVE promised the little ones to tell them a story, and so, the night before Christmas, I gather them around the family hearth, in the old home, and tell them of the Child Jesus. ¶ If, by this means, I may bring the birth of the Master more clearly to the vision of the dear children He loved so well, my heart's desire will have been realized.

A. W. M.

And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.—Matthew 2, 6.

TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS OF
THE WHOLE ROUND
WORLD

Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.—Matthew 19, 14.

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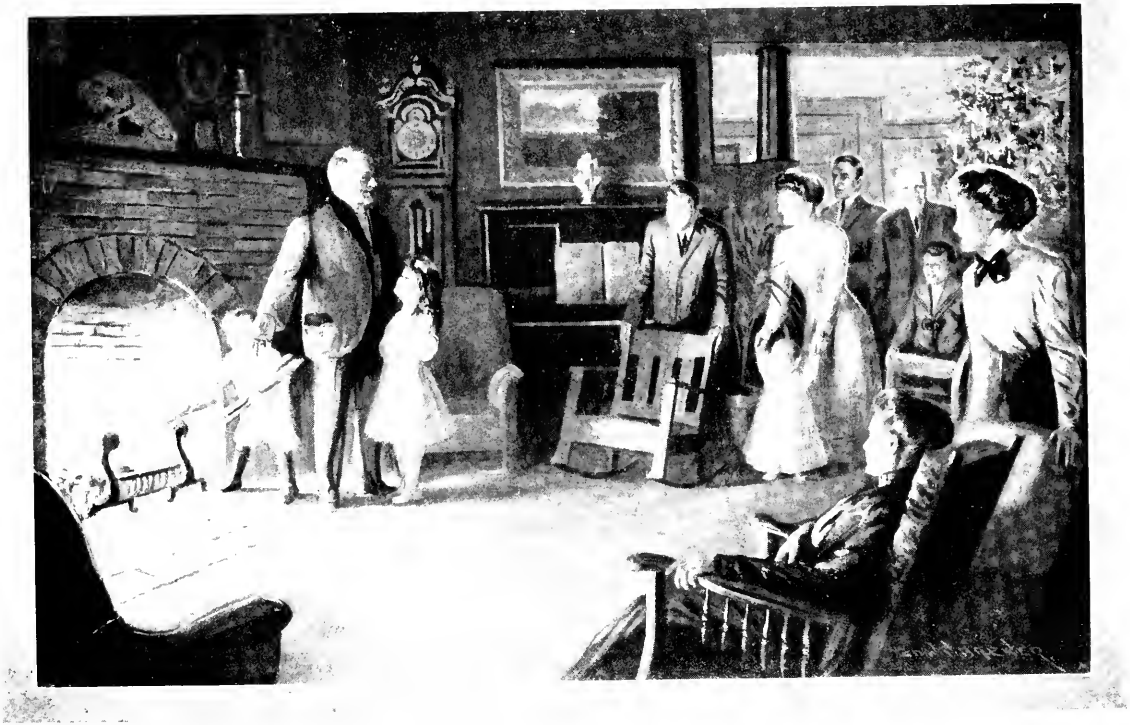

"PULL UP THE CHAIRS AROUND THE HEARTH"
(ECHOES OF BETHLEHEM)

PROLOGUE

COME Rodney, Irma, Morse, and Guy,
With Grandpa and papa;
Aunt Ida, too, just bring with you,
And June, and dear mamma.
Pull up the chairs around the hearth
That all may find a seat;
Stir up the fire, throw on more wood;
Let's *feel* the glowing heat
From out the dear old chimney-place
Our fathers loved so well.
As promised you, this Christmas Eve
A story I will tell.
Now sit up close; you older ones
Must not make any noise;
This story is for *you*, as well
As for the girls and boys.

THE ANNUNCIATION

'TWAS Nineteen Hundred years ago,
While Herod yet was king,
An angel (Gabriel) came to earth
Most joyful news to bring.
There dwelt in rustic Nazareth,
A town in Galilee,
A simple maid, of Jewish birth;
Most pure and fair was she.

She loved the Lord with all her heart
And morning, noon, and night,
As was the custom with the Jews,
To Him her faith did plight.
While in her chamber thus she prayed,
This salutation came:
"*Hail thou who highly favored art,*
Henceforth blest be thy name."

The loving voice, so strangely sweet,
Fell gently on her ear;
In wonderment she turned, and saw
An angel standing near.
Her anxious face, her troubled look,
The angel now beheld;
"Fear not," the holy herald said;
"Be all thy fears dispelled;

"For Mary, thou hast with the Lord
His fullest favor found;
He knows that faith and purity
Doth in thy heart abound;
And now, my child, thou favored one,
To you good news I bring,
For God hath willed that thou shouldst be
The mother of a King.

"In holiness thou shalt conceive
And bear thy God a Son
Whom all the earth shall know to love;
And His will shall be done.
He shall be great, He shall be called
The Son of the Most High;
His light shall shine throughout the world
And God be ever nigh.

"He shall inherit David's throne;
His love none shall transcend;
He over Jacob's house shall reign,
His kingdom have no end;
And Jesus thou shalt call His name,
The Friend of sinful man;
No babe like this hath yet been born,
Not since the world began."

Then great was her astonishment—
Such godly favor shown;
"How can this be?" the virgin said,
"Since man I have not known."
The trysting angel then did say
Unto the wond'ring maid:
"The Holy Ghost shall come to thee;
Be thou not, then, dismayed.

"His might shall overshadow thee;
Great honor thou hast won;
The Holy Child so born of thee,
Shall be God's only Son.
Behold, thy kin, Elisabeth,
She also hath conceived,
Despite old age and barrenness,
O'er which she humbly grieved.

"With God all things are possible,
His might may not be stayed."
Thus spake the great ambassador,
While Mary meekly prayed,
"Behold the handmaid of the Lord,
O may His will be done
To me, according to thy word,
I'll bear Him thus a Son."

The maid arose; her guest had flown
To realms of God's domain;
She hasty preparation made
Judean hills to gain,
Where lived the good Elisabeth,
The mother of Saint John,
Whose counsel Mary much desired,
And fain would lean upon;

For maid and matron were ordained
Of God to bless the earth;
Our Saviour and the saintly John
Bore kinship close in birth.
Zacharias' home in Juda's hills
A hundred miles away
The humble maiden sought on foot,
A custom of the day.

For modern means of journeying
Were yet to man unknown,
The use of horse and heraldry
Vouchsafed to kings alone.
When Mary's voice her cousin heard,
Her face with joy did shine,
The Holy Herald John, unborn,
Convulsed his sacred shrine.

And then upon Elisabeth
A holy fervor came.
"*Behold the mother of my Lord,*"
She cried in loud acclaim.
"Pray whence this honor, thou shouldst come,
My holy guest to be?
The comforts of my humble home,
I gladly share with thee.

"Well blest is she that hath believed;
For there shall be performed
The things divine made known to her,
Whom God hath thus adorned."
"My soul doth magnify the Lord,"
This song then Mary voiced,
"In Him, my Saviour and my God,
My spirit hath rejoiced.

"My low estate He doth regard;
All generations now
Shall call me blesséd; to His will
I meekly, gladly bow.
For He that mighty is hath done
In truth great things to me;
His boundless wisdom, power and love
My light, my life shall be.

"His mercy is on them that fear,
And glorify His name;
And all mankind, in prayer and song,
His greatness shall proclaim.
With strength of His all-powerful arm
He hath the proud repressed,
The mighty from their seats put down,
The lowly ones hath blessed.

"He hath the hungry with good things
Most bountifully filled;
The rich and mighty sent away,
'Tis thus that He hath willed.
As He unto our fathers spake,
His servant Israel
He hath *helped*, and, as He *promised*,
We shall see *Emmanuel*."

And Mary with Elisabeth
Sojourned for many weeks;
And then, with thoughts of dear ones there,
Her own loved home she seeks.
Her glorious Magnificat,
Her beatific hymn,
Will live, and shine, throughout the world,
When Caesar's fame is dim.

The peace of perfect purity
Had her young heart enshrined;
No troubled thought, no anxious care
Disturbed her tranquil mind.
With God all things are possible,
Believed this virgin maid;
And for His love, and guiding care,
She most devoutly prayed.

In Nazareth, where Mary lived,
There dwelt an humble Jew;
He was, by trade, a carpenter,
Whom Galileans knew
To be a wise and godly man,
In Jewish records shown
Of royal lineage, rightful heir
To David's ancient throne.

His name was Joseph; Mary was
Espoused to be his wife,
And, intermingled, doubt and fear
Were in his bosom rife.
But He who calms the winter's blast
Unto the lamb that's shorn,
Revealed to Joseph, in a dream,
The truth of the unborn;

Thus shielding Mary's innocence
In sight of her betrothed;
With peace, and perfect happiness,
Their union now is clothed.
Then Joseph, being raised from sleep,
Did as the angel said;
He sought the Holy Virgin's home,
And straightway they were wed.

Now in those days, it came to pass,
There went out a decree,
Throughout the Roman world entire,
A census there should be;
And all to their own city went,
(Saint Luke hath plainly told)
The place of their nativity,
Their names to be enrolled.

Augustus ruled with powerful hand,
Most mighty of his time;
Each one must honor his command,
All men from every clime.
Thus Joseph with no choice was left;
The king must be obeyed;
So then to go to Bethlehem
He preparation made.

His bride he would not leave behind;
The journey was too long
For her on foot, and so they took
A donkey, safe and strong,
Which Mary rode, tradition says,
While Joseph, by her side,
Walked with an ever watchful care,
The donkey's course to guide.

Their route lay south through busy towns
Of ancient Galilee;
Across the plain Esdraelon
And thence to Sebaste.
They may have spent the second night
At Jacob's sacred well
Near Sychar in Samaria;
The Scriptures do not tell.

But sure it is, they did not look
For shelter, food, or drink,
From people of Samaria;
No Jew would of it think;
Nor would a true Samaritan
Have dealings with a Jew;
The temple on Mount Gerizim
Made converts not a few.

The food they ate, their blankets, too,
From home were likely brought,
With other comforts plentiful
Of which kind friends had thought;
And Mary's heart no doubt is filled
With gratitude profound,
When past the heights of Akrabbim
They reach Judean ground.

For now they tread the holy soil
Of their ancestral home,
Where lived that great historic race
Which o'er the earth doth roam.
Judea's bleak and barren hills,
And every landscape view,
Were hallowed by the sight of spots
Beloved by every Jew.

And Shiloh now, where Hannah came,
Before the Lord to pray,
Would greet them first, and Gophna then,
The next town on their way.
Then Bethel, a most sacred spot,
Where once the prophets dwelt;
The place where Jacob in a dream
God's mighty presence felt.

Then Ramah, where there lived and died
The godly Samuel,
Who built an altar to the Lord
And judged all Israel.
Next Mizpah where Philistine lords
By God were overthrown,
Where Samuel devoutly raised
His Ebenezer stone.

And then, at last, Jerusalem
Meets their expectant view;
This sacred home of ancient kings
Their interest doth renew.
They likely stop for food and drink
Down by the Joppa gate,
Where teeming commerce hath been known
Since days of ancient date.

When well refreshed at "market court,"
They hasten on their way,
For Bethlehem, their journey's end,
Near five miles south doth lay.
As out the Joppa gate they pass,
And to the left they go,
The way is rough, precipitous,
Their progress very slow.

They see Mount Zion towering high
Above the city walls;
The lower pool of Gihon then
Their next attention calls.
They cross the valley of Hinnom
Along the aqueduct,
Built for the pools of Solomon
The waters to conduct.

They slowly climb the southern slope,
Ascend unto the plain
Of Rephaim, where David smote
Philistine hosts in twain.
They now approach their journey's end,
Tho weary, travel fast;
They, from the border of the plain,
See Bethlehem at last.

'Mid ever rugged rocks and hills
With fertile fields between,
Where, many centuries before,
The comely Ruth did glean,
Where Boaz, "mighty man of wealth,"
Was smitten with her charms,
Whose honored wife she soon became,
And left Naomi's arms.

The mountain town lies just across
A valley, deep and long;
The anxious Joseph looks, and sees
A great and motley throng
To be enrolled, so on they go
Once more with quickened pace,
For Joseph fears that, for the night,
He may not find a place

Of shelter for his gentle wife;
The journey, over long,
Was much for woman to endure,
Tho she be well and strong.
And as to ancient Ephratah
They now draw very near,
Along the way they pass a spot
To Jewish hearts most dear.

The sacred site of Rachel's tomb,
Where Jacob raised the stone
In honor of his first beloved,
Who resteth there alone.
All dust-begrimed and travel-stained
They reach the famous well
From which King David longed to drink
(As Chronicles doth tell).

The village entrance lies beyond,
A quarter mile or so,
And close at hand the Chimham Inn;
To it at once they go.
Great crowds of people throng the way;
The keeper at the gate
Declares for them there is no room;
Alas, they are too late.

For Mary's welfare Joseph fears;
He feels the air that chills
The hapless, houseless wayfarer
High up on Juda's hills.
At last they find a lowly place
Of shelter for the night,
A cave, or grotto, close at hand,
Tho warm, devoid of light,

Where David may have housed his flocks,
The mangers yet were there;
Tho built of stone, they shelter gave
This God-united pair;
And there was saintly Mary's bed
By angels watched till morn.
As God's own star shone o'er her head,
The Holy Child was born.

THE NATIVITY

THE orb of day has passed from view
Beyond the western hills;
The shepherds call their bleating flocks
To rest, as nature wills.
The day is done; the night is come;
The camp-fire, burning low,
Betokens quietude and peace
Within its circling glow.

The evening air is crisp and clear;
The sparkling stars above
Down on the sleeping shepherds there
Shed forth their light of love.
No sound disturbs the deep repose,
While o'er the camp and sheep
One trusted herdsman, at the gate,
Doth faithful vigil keep.

The midnight hour now draweth nigh;
The moon hath ceased to shine;
The twinkling stars are lost to view,
Outshone by power divine;
While slowly o'er the field there falls
A soft, celestial sheen,
The watchman looks toward the sky,
Where wondrous light is seen.

Its dazzling brightness blinds his eye;
He looks, and looks again;
No man had seen the like before,
None such since seen by men.
The wonder grew, as light divine
Illumined hill and plain;
"Awake!" the startled watchman cries,
Nor does he cry in vain.

The shepherds, clamb'ring to their feet,
Can scarce regain their sight;
In unison, they, trembling, cry,
"What is it? Whence the light?"
"See! See the fire in yonder sky!"
The answ'ring watchman cried;
The frightened keepers of the flocks
With fear were terrified.

But soon they heard an angel say,
"Peace; peace be unto thee;
I bear you tidings of great joy,
Which to all people be."
A holy hush comes o'er the earth,
And heaven, bending low
As if to catch her list'ning ear,
This message doth bestow:

"In David's city there is born
(To you glad news I bring)
A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord;
Hail ye the new-born King.
His swaddling clothes a sign shall be,
When you the Babe shall find;
Laid in a manger, ye shall see
The Saviour of mankind."

Then round the angel suddenly
There swept a wingéd throng,
A multitude of Heaven's host,
In praise-resounding song.
The raptured shepherds shout for joy:
"Hear ye what God hath willed;
The Christ is born! The Christ is born!
God's promise is fulfilled."

Then "Glory be to God on high"
Rose in triumphant strain,
While "Peace on earth, good will to men"
Came back in sweet refrain.
The wingéd messengers had flown;
Good tidings they had told;
The new-born "Shepherd of the sheep"
Will care for all His fold.

The trusting shepherds leave their flocks;
They haste to Bethlehem
To worship there the new-born Babe,
By God made known to them.
They skirt the mountain, pass the town,
Directly reach the inn,
Where Joseph and his wearied wife
No room could find within.

The man on watch they, breathless, hail,
Their story *him* to tell;
The dazzling light he, *too*, had seen,
Nor could his fears dispel.
"What thinkest *thou?*" the watchman cried,
"What *caused* the wondrous light
From out the sky, that we have seen,
Who do not sleep this night?"

"The Christ is born! Our King is come!"
"The Christ! Can it be so?"
"Great things this night we've seen and heard;
Come, to the cave we go."
"The cave, why there?" "To see the Child."
"No child you there will find."
"Well, come with us, the Saviour see,
And free your doubting mind.

"For in a manger He doth lie;
While we were in the field
The angel of the Lord came down
And this to us revealed.
The cave alone, in Bethlehem,
Hath mangers; hence you see
'Tis there we go the Babe to find;
He surely there must be."

With faith increased and hope enlarged,
The watchman leads the way;
That they may find the Holy Child
They all devoutly pray.
The cavern now they quickly reach,
A lantern burns within.
The door, unguarded, stands ajar;
Unbidden they go in,

And by the dim, uncertain light
Can scarcely see their way;
But presently a voice they hear:
"What would you, friends, I pray?"
"I give you peace," the watchman said,
"For we this night would find
A new-born Babe, in swaddling clothes,
The Saviour of mankind."

'Twas Joseph's voice the shepherds heard,
And as they then drew near,
With much emotion he replied:
"The Child you seek is here."
They then in wonderment were led
Unto a manger low,
And there they saw, on bed of straw,
The Christ they fain would know.

And Mary, too, was with her child,
While in her guileless face
A holy mother love is seen,
Illumed with saintly grace.
Now, speechless with astonishment,
The shepherds stand about;
"It is the Christ," they whisper low;
(The sight hath vanquished doubt).

"It is the Lord!" they all exclaim,
"And wondrous are His ways."
Down on their knees they quickly fall
In silent, fervent praise.
These simple men, now doubting not,
Devoutly kiss the hem
Of Mary's robe, and hasten forth
To tell all Bethlehem

The gladsome news; and, as they go,
They greet the coming morn
With songs of praise to God on high,
For Christ the Saviour born.
All they to whom the shepherds told
What they had heard and seen,
Were greatly moved, with anxious hearts,
Their hopes and fears between.

But some there were, who knew the law,
Whose souls must have been thrilled
With joy, that Micah's prophecy
Was thus at last fulfilled.
And, when the Babe was eight days old,
They piously conformed
To precepts of the Jewish law,
The sacred rites performed.

They took Him to the temple, to
Present Him to the Lord;
And by an humble sacrifice
Their fervent faith record.

In sanctified Jerusalem
There dwelt a righteous man,
To whom the Holy Ghost revealed
The Messianic plan.

God told the agéd Simeon
That nought should intervene
To end his life on earth until
The Saviour he had seen.
Drawn by the Spirit, he within
The temple sought a place,
And when the parents brought the Child
He saw Him face to face.

Then took he Him up in his arms;
His voice in prayer was heard:
"Lord, let me now depart in peace,
According to Thy Word;
Mine eyes have Thy salvation seen,
Which Thou, before the face
Of all the people, hast prepared
That all may share Thy grace.

"For Gentile and for Jew alike
Thy mercy Thou hast shown;
That whosoever will, may come,
Through Jesus, to Thy throne."
This righteous man most tenderly
The Child and parents blessed;
To Mary, in prophetic words,
His faith in Christ expressed.

And then the agéd Anna came;
Likewise *her* thanks she gave
Unto the Lord, and spake of Christ
As born with power to save.
And Joseph and his holy wife
Were wondrously impressed;
They marveled much that these two saints
So soon the Christ confessed.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

NOW, many hundred years before
Our Holy Saviour's birth,
God's chosen prophets had foretold
His pilgrimage to earth;
For Moses, Micah, Nahum and
Isaiah prophesied
A ruler, out of Israel,
To God and man allied.

Corruption reigned throughout the world,
And wickedness was rife;
Amongst the nations of the earth
Was much ungodly strife.
The Jews themselves ignored the law,
Except the righteous few,
Observing only outward forms
As less sincere they grew.

God to them frequent warning gave,
Besought them to amend
Their ways of living, keep the law,
And righteousness defend.
They would not hearken; so, at last,
The great Chaldean king
Of Babylon against the Jews
A powerful host doth bring.

Jerusalem was then besieged,
And not without success;
The Jewish king, Jehoiakim,
They thoroughly suppress.
And subjects of the vanquished king,
Most learnéd of the land,
Were led away to Babylon,
As was divinely planned.

Amongst the hapless prisoners
Was Daniel, wise and good;
He kept the law; he sought to dwell
In peaceful brotherhood
With all mankind; and soon he gained
The love and great respect
Of Ashpenaz, a man of rank,
One of the king's elect.

God favored Daniel wondrously:
He made him understand
The dreams forgotten by the king,
Which wise men of the land
Could not recall, so, therefore, they
Were all condemned to die;
But Daniel went before the king
And asked for him to try,

And with God's help he learned the truth;
The wise men thus were saved.
For Daniel, by this timely act,
The way to fame was paved.
The king fell down and worshipped him,
Paid tribute to God's power,
And unto Daniel gave great gifts;
And straightway, from that hour,

Was Daniel made a ruler of
The province Babylon,
And chief of all the governors,
Whose favor he had won.
His wisdom brought him great renown;
But there were yet three more;
Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego
Made up the righteous four.

These captive Jews could not be swerved;
Tho in a Gentile land,
They loved the Lord, obeyed His laws,
Were guided by His hand.
Their faith in God was greater than
Their fear of lion's den;
Not e'en the fi'ry furnace could
Dismay these earnest men.

The courage of these godly saints
Of the Mosaic law,
Must have impressed Chaldeans with
Most reverential awe.
They through their long captivity
The sacred truths unfold;
And Balaam's prophecies, no doubt,
Were to Chaldeans told.

And so the great astrologers,
And men of wisest mind,
Were likely searching Juda's skies,
The wondrous star to find;
When it appeared their faith was strong,
And there was no delay;
They forthwith to Jerusalem
Devoutly made their way.

As from the East unto the West
O'er hill and vale they go,
Through verdant meads whose limpid streams
Into the wadies flow,
Across the desert's barren sands,
Through forests dense and wild,
The beaming star doth guide them on
Toward the Kingly Child.

At length Mount Pisgah's lofty heights
Far distant they descry;
And then Frank Mountain greets their view
Against the western sky.
From Nebo, Pisgah's grandest peak,
Obeying God's command,
The faithful Moses, ere he died,
Beheld the promised land.

The scene inspires them wondrously;
Each pious bosom thrills,
As they recall the sacred truths,
And climb Peraea's hills.
Along the wady Heshbon then,
Mayhap they made their way,
As westward through the mountain pass
Its craggéd course doth lay.

As down the wild and rocky glen
Their journey they pursue,
The lowest, saltest sea of earth
Bursts out upon their view.
It rests between majestic cliffs
Two thousand feet below;
Along its shores the tamarisk
And Sodom apples grow.

While far beneath its acrid depths
The vale of Siddim lies,
Where Sodom and Gomorrah know
No more the sunlit skies.
The Jordan, fringed with olive trees
And oleanders green,
With Canaan's holy hills and vales,
Complete the thrilling scene.

The living springs of Lebanon
Far north from Galilee,
Meet here the turbid waters of
The Dead and briny sea,
As on between the Jordan's banks
To nature's restful sleep
Time marks their never-ceasing flow
Into the lifeless deep.

And there their course is at an end;
Beyond they cannot go;
The rockbound shores and mighty depths
Reveal no outward flow,
Except in vapor, heavenward,
When, purged and purified,
God sends them back to bless the earth
And swell the flowing tide.

These learnéd men from out the East
Were, doubtless, much impressed;
For they were skilled in nature's laws,
With wisdom greatly blessed.
And as they near the river's brink,
Go north along its shore,
Ere long they reach the lower ford,
Where, centuries before,

The ransomed hosts of Israel
First crossed the sacred stream,
And Joshua, by God's command,
Set up a new régime.
They, over Jordan, pass Gilgal,
Their hearts in faith's enthrall;
And soon the walls of Jericho
Historic scenes recall.

From thence toward Jerusalem
They go without delay;
For Zion's holy city now
Is but six hours away.
They pass Brook Cherith's fastnesses,
To which Elijah fled,
Who by the Lord's express command
Was by the ravens fed;

And many other gruesome caves
Along the famous road,
Wherein the roving Bedawi
Took up their drear abode.
'Tis here the good Samaritan
A righteous lesson leaves,
In binding up the wounds of him
Who fell among the thieves.

And as they hasten, much there is
Their interest to command;
Reminders of Mosaic law
They see on every hand.
Judea's hills and vales and seas
Unite in grand array
To verify the Holy Word,
The hallowed truths portray.

At length they reach Mount Olivet,
Go round the rocky steep
Into the vale Jehoshaphat,
Wherein the prophets sleep.
They cross Brook Kidron hurriedly,
Nor have they long to wait;
For soon they see the city walls
And gain the Golden Gate,

Where they with eager questioning
The sentinel confuse,
Concerning Him who hath been born
The King of all the Jews.
"I know no king but Herod, Sirs,"
The Roman guard replies,
While he surveys the strangers with
An undisguised surprise.

Their questions, with their rich attire
And stately mien, impressed
The people, who, now here, now there,
Their wonderment expressed.
A motley throng had gathered, they
Were pressing close to hear,
When, from within the crowded way,
An officer drew near.

From left to right and right to left
His javelin did play,
While in a voice of bold command,
"Give way!" he cried, "Give way!"
At length he gained the central group;
He there the wise men found;
"What would you?" he of them inquired,
With dignity profound.

"We seek the new-born Jewish King;
Have journeyed from afar
To worship Him; for in the East
We've seen His wondrous star."
"There is no king but Herod here,
Who reigneth o'er the Jews,"
Replied the Roman, much perplexed
By the astounding news.

"But stay, you say He's lately born—
Behold, I'm not a Jew;
Go farther, to the temple, and
The question there renew,
The Doctors or the Priests will know;
Or, what is better still,
Seek Herod's aid your King to find,
He'll help you, with a will."

The officer then cleared the way,
The strangers passed the gate,
Nor paused until they reached the khan,
More interest to create.
They knew that they were well proclaimed;
Their mission widely known;
As those of whom they had inquired,
Had much attention shown.

They felt that, ere the day was spent,
'Twould come to Herod's ears,
Whose crime-seared conscience would at last
Be thrilled with gravest fears.
Now this proved true; the wicked king
And all Jerusalem
Were greatly troubled when the birth
Of Christ was known to them.

By Herod's call the Sanhedrim
Was hastily convened,
And from the elders, scribes and priests
The wily monarch gleaned
The prophecies concerning Christ,
Where Jesus should be born,
Whose promised rule in Israel
He held in secret scorn.

He summoned then the strangers, who,
In truth, he greatly feared,
And secretly inquired of them
What time the star appeared.
"Go now," he said, "with diligence,
And search in Bethlehem,
And when you've found Him bring me word,
That I may worship Him."

The king's command, forthwith obeyed,
Brought peace and joy untold
To these devout and godly men,
Whose hearts were strong and bold.
For lo, the star which they had seen
Beamed brightly on before,
Till finally it came, and stood,
Above the Saviour's door.

The lowly place which shelters Him
They enter *reverently;*
And gold and frankincense and myrrh
They offer *worshipfully;*
On bended knee they homage pay
The world's Deliverer;
Depart another way, and foil
Its *chiefest murderer.*

And Joseph, also, warned of God,
With Babe and Virgin fled
To Egypt, where they dwelt until
The wicked king was dead.
When Herod found that he was mocked,
His vengeful heart gave way
To cruelty beyond compare,
Before or since that day.

And all the babes of Bethlehem,
Not more than two years old,
He mercilessly put to death,
As prophecy foretold.
But soon the final summons came
To this poor crime-steeped king;
Nor wealth, nor fame, nor earthly friend,
Could to him succor bring.

His life was ignominious,
He died in wild despair;
He bore no cross for righteousness,
No crown was his to wear.

"But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

"And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene."

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